June 1969

DANGER forward

The Magazine Of The Big Red One, Vietnam

New Citizens
Big Red One Style

Scout Dogs
A Nose For Trouble

Assault At
An Loc

Song Be Road
Open For Business

Another Birthday
For 1st Division

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

2003.142

DANGER forward

Volume three, Number two—June 1969

The Magazine Of The Big Red One, Vietnam

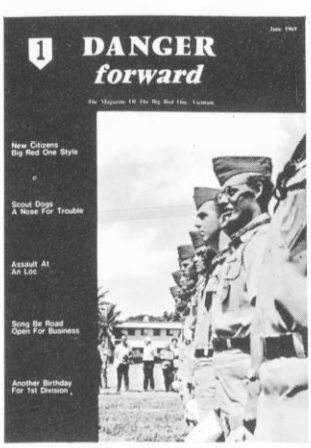
First Infantry Division
APO San Francisco 96345

COMMAND GROUP

MG Orwin C. Talbott
Commanding General
BG Albert H. Smith
Assistant Division Commander
COL Dennis P. McAuliffe
Assistant Division Commander
COL Archie R. Hyle
Chief of Staff

EDITORIAL STAFF

LTC Patrick A. Vitello
Information Officer
1LT Willie F. Johnson
Publications Officer
SP5 Thomas Arno
Editor



CONTENTS

A New Life Begins 2
The story of twenty-four 1st Infantry Division soldiers and their success in becoming Americans

Scout Dogs 7
The Division's 41st Scout Dog Platoon in Lai Khe provides the noses that smell trouble before trouble happens.

Vietnam Battles 12
Vietnam Battles 46–50 cover the Division's actions from January through June 1969.

The Road to Song Be 26
An arrow of pacification

Combat Medics 28
A personal glimpse into the lives of soldiers who save other's lives in battle by risking their own

121 Signal Battalion 32
The story of one of the most decorated units in the Army today.

Taking Care of its Own 37
The story of the Big Red One Association in Vietnam

Big Red One Anniversary 40
The 1st Division celebrates its 52nd anniversary

One-Millionth R&R 45

◀ ABOUT THE COVER ▶

1st Division soldiers stand ready to take the oath of allegiance to the United States during American citizenship ceremonies in Honolulu.

Photo By Capt. John Kelly

DANGER FORWARD, an authorized publication of the US Army, provides timely, authoritative information of professional interest on combat operations, revolutionary development programs and combat support procedures of the First Infantry Division, Vietnam. It serves as a means of expression for views of the Commanding General and achieves command information objectives of the Department of the Army and the First Infantry Division. Material of interest to Division members and the Army in general is invited and should be mailed to: Editor, DANGER FORWARD, Information Office, First Infantry Division, APO 96345. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Department of the Army.

The title DANGER FORWARD is copyrighted by the Society of the First Division.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

A NEW LIFE BEGINS

American Citizenship for twenty-four 1st Infantry Division soldiers

Photos By
Capt. John Kelly

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Take twenty-four 1st Infantry Division immigrant soldiers who want to become American citizens. Mix thoroughly with a new change in an old naturalization standard, and sprinkle with one man's effort. Shove the ingredients into the oven and let simmer. Remove seven days later and you have a batch of new American citizens.

It wasn't as easy as baking a cake though. It took almost four months of planning to become a reality.

The soldiers were flown from Saigno's Ton Son Nhut Airport, April 25. Representing 15 different countries, the immigrants landed at Hickam Air Force Base some 16 hours later aboard a regular military charter flight.

The aircraft was a bright pea-green Braniff passenger jet, and the soldiers mused about the color being next only to U.S. Army green. But, they all warmly called the plane "our freedom bird," and knew only that she had taken them to the front door of American citizenship.

The soldiers went about checking their baggage through customs and orienting themselves to the island of Oahu, which literally translated means the *Gathering Place*.

Some coming directly from the battlefields of Vietnam, and others coming from behind typewriters and messhall stoves, it was the first pause in months of duty for many of the servicemen. Their stay in Hawaii would last one week.

In charge of the group was Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dale F. Just of Holdrege, Neb., legal administrative technician in the Staff Judge Advocate Office in Lai Khe. He was the man responsible for bringing the

Hands raised for the oath of allegiance to the United States, soldiers of the 1st Division are only words away from American citizenship.

Hawaii's Governor John A. Burns praised the soldiers for their overcoming the obstacles of wartime conflict to arrive in Honolulu for the citizenship ceremonies. The Governor told the men he hoped American citizenship would be as rewarding for them as it has been for all Americans.

just lost themselves under the Hawaiian sun and palm trees.

All reported bright and early for oral examinations, April 28. The tests would determine whether they would be naturalized on the appointed hour.

During the examination session, the soldiers were greeted by both newspaper and broadcast reporters. A local television cameraman recorded the proceedings. That evening most of the immigrants huddled close to the television to enjoy their brief celebrity status during a news program. Everyone had passed his naturalization quiz with flying colors.

On May 1 the Bar Association of Hawaii, the Federal Bar Association and the United States Army joined forces to commemorate the special *Law Day* naturalization ceremonies.

The unique outdoor session of the Federal District Court, held on the Ft. DeRussy paradegrounds, offered a naturalization hearing to confer United States citizenship on approximately 200 applicants, including the 24 Big Red One soldiers.

Among the spectators on hand for the ceremonies were Hawaii's Governor John A. Burns; Hayashi Yoshimi, United States attorney for the district of Hawaii; John F. O'Shea, district director of immigration and naturalization in Hawaii, and Major General Roy Lassetter Jr., Commanding General, US Army, Hawaii.

Bruce R. Thompson, visiting United States District Judge from Reno, Nev., presided over the court session.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

just lost themselves under the Hawaiian sun and palm trees.

All reported bright and early for oral examinations, April 28. The tests would determine whether they would be naturalized on the appointed hour.

During the examination session, the soldiers were greeted by both newspaper and broadcast reporters. A local television cameraman recorded the proceedings. That evening most of the immigrants huddled close to the television to enjoy their brief celebrity status during a news program. Everyone had passed his naturalization quiz with flying colors.

On May 1 the Bar Association of Hawaii, the Federal Bar Association and the United States Army joined forces to commemorate the special *Law Day* naturalization ceremonies.

The unique outdoor session of the Federal District Court, held on the Ft. DeRussy paradegrounds, offered a naturalization hearing to confer United States citizenship on approximately 200 applicants, including the 24 Big Red One soldiers.

Among the spectators on hand for the ceremonies were Hawaii's Governor John A. Burns; Hayashi Yoshimi, United States attorney for the district of Hawaii; John F. O'Shea, district director of immigration and naturalization in Hawaii, and Major General Roy Lassetter Jr., Commanding General, US Army, Hawaii.

Bruce R. Thompson, visiting United States District Judge from Reno, Nev., presided over the court session.

Capt. Osvaldo Bustos is a doctor in Bravo Company, 1st Medical Battalion. He left Vietnam an Argentine. He returned as an American.

An artillery volley is fired in honor of the 1st Division soldiers during American citizenship ceremonies at Ft. DeRussy. At bottom left of photo are Major General Roy Lassetter Jr., Commanding General, U.S. Army, Hawaii, and Governor Burns.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

SP4 Gary Walker of Canada and PFC Jorge Ramirez of Cuba receive their certificates of U.S. citizenship, signifying them as new American citizens.

After a colorful military pageantry which included a troop inspection by Governor Burns and General Lassetter, and a 19-gun volley from the firing guns of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 487th Artillery, 29th Infantry Brigade, the soldiers stood to take oath of allegiance to the United States.

Following the oath, Captain Bustos addressed the court and the several hundred people who gathered for the ceremonies.

"We've all been brought together in Hawaii from the battlefields of Vietnam where we have been engaged with our fellow Americans in a major confrontation between the free world and the communist world," he said. He singled out Warrant Officer Just "whose devoted effort in addition to his normal duties resulted in our being in Hawaii today to make our long standing dream come true."

Governor Burns remarked, "May American citizenship be as rewarding to you as it has been for all Americans throughout the last 190 years."

Immediately following the ceremonies, a letter to the President of the United States was mailed by Captain Bustos. It contained the signatures of all 1st Infantry Division soldiers who had become Americans, and expressed a feeling of admiration for being able to join the United States in citizenship.

Today, 20 of the group is still in Vietnam fighting for their country. But now they belong to that great melting pot of diversity—called America.

Capt. Bustos addresses the U.S. District Court and the hundreds of people who gathered for the naturalization ceremonies.

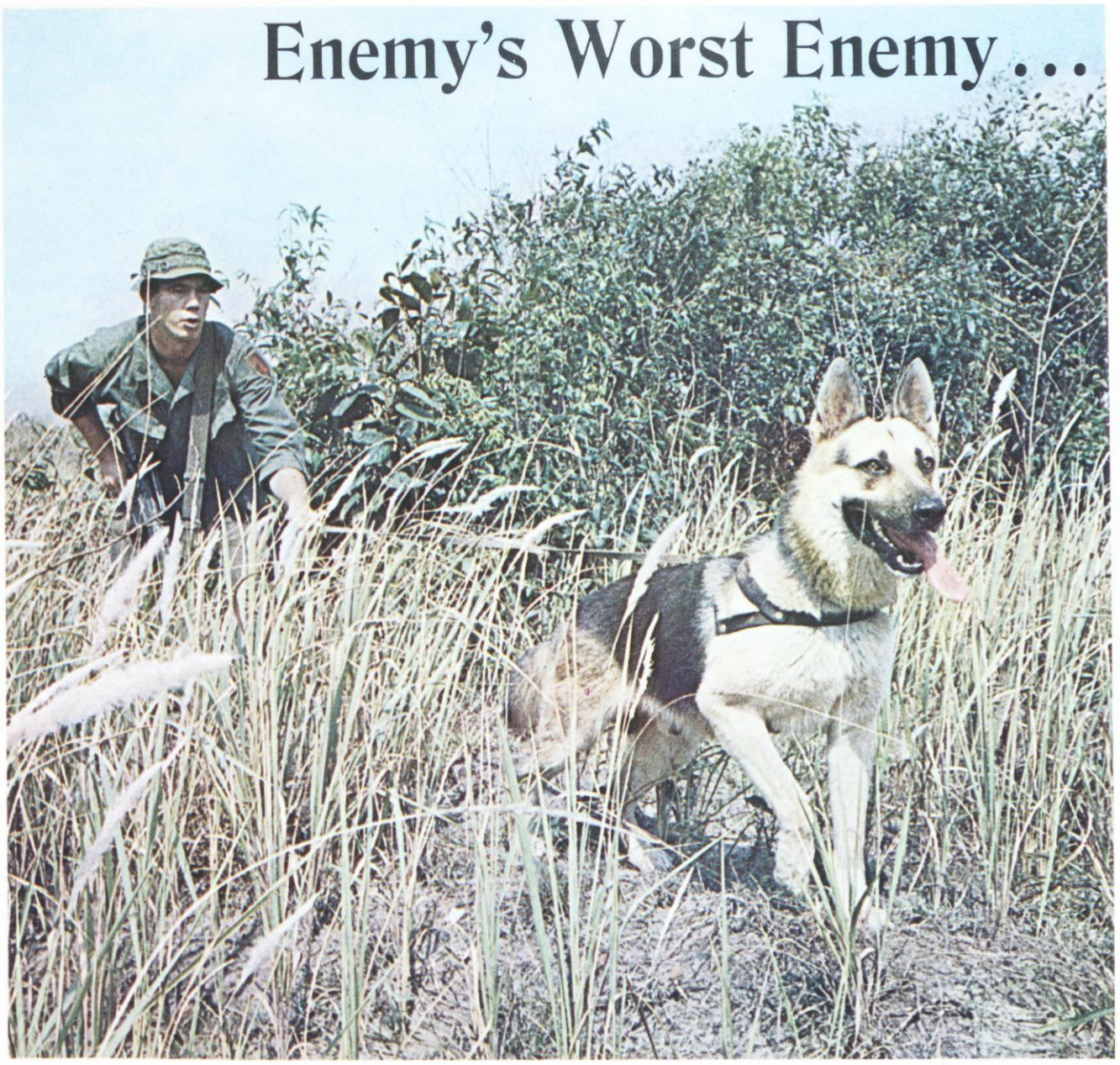
Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Congratulations to the new American citizens from the BIG RED ONE

GERMANY
Sergeant Myron Siczkowycz, Co. D, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry
Specialist 5 Adolph E. Banko, 1st Admin Co.
Private First Class Gerhard P. Baye, Battery A, 8th Battalion, 6th Artillery
Private First Class John A. Pawlak, Co. C, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry
Private First Class Richard H. Wimmer, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery
NETHERLANDS
Staff Sergeant Frans F. Vander Capellen, Battery B, 8th Battalion, 6th Artillery
Specialist 5 Cornelis Bor, HHC, 2nd Battalion, 6th Artillery
Specialist 4 Tim Sneep, 314th Aviation Support Detachment
Specialist 4 Robert Debree, Delta Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry.
ENGLAND
Specialist 4 Alpheus A. Byam, Co. D, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry
Specialist 4 Ronald A. Millard, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery
ARGENTINA
Captain Osvaldo Bustos, Co. B, 1st Medical Battalion
Private First Class Daniel M. Demelli, Co. A, 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry
CUBA
Private First Class Jorge S. Ramirez, Co. C, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry
YUGOSLAVIA
Sergeant Milan G. Nedic, 1st Admin Co.
MEXICO
Staff Sergeant Daniel A. Carrizales, G Troop, 2nd squadron 11 ACR.
PERU
Specialist 4 Juan A. Campos, Co. E, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry
CANADA
Specialist 4 Gary E. Walker, 1st Military Police Co.
WEST INDIES
Specialist 5 Richard A. Chang Leung, Battery E, 2nd Battalion, 33rd Artillery
SCOTLAND
Specialist 5 Robert Broadley, 1st Admin Co.
NICARAGUA
Private First Class Oscar R. Briones, Battery E, 1st Battalion, 5th Artillery
GREECE
Specialist 4 Achilles Farsolas, Co. A, 121 Signal Battalion
ITALY
Specialist 5 Carlo V. Paoletti, Co. D, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry
PHILIPPINES
Private First Class Fausto I. Beleno, Battery E, 2nd Battalion, 33rd Artillery

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Enemy's Worst Enemy...



BY SP4 WAIN RUBENSTEIN

The use of dogs as an auxiliary in war is as old as war itself. Primitive man used dogs to guard his family, his belongings and himself. He also took his dog into battle with him when rival tribes clashed. Throughout the history of warfare, dogs have gone into combat at the side of their masters or have been used in direct support of combat operations.

In May 1942 the Army established the K-9 Corps. Throughout World War II, 595 dogs were trained for scouting duties. Some of the canine established distinguished records and were officially cited for outstanding and faithful service.

The Army has employed various breeds of dog, and have determined the German Shepherd to be the most suitable for scouting. Its working ability, temperament, size, availability for procurement and adaptability to all types of climate and terrain are the reasons for the choice.

Today in Vietnam, various scout dog platoons are in wide use among infantry units. The 1st Infantry Division is no exception. They are supported by the 35th at Dian and the 41st Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) stationed at Lai Khe.

"The scout dog has become a lot more popular over here in the last few years," asserts Sergeant Jack C. Russell, training NCO for the 41st platoon.

However, the dogs must come a long way before they can be utilized on ambush patrols and recon-in-force teams by the Big Red One. Scout dogs differ in both temperament and training from tracking and sentry dogs.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Scout Dog leads handler to the enemy.

Tracker dogs are usually docile and sentry dogs are trained to kill. The scout dog, under ordinary conditions are neither docile or killers, but well trained, obedient and alert. For these reasons, particular care goes into selecting a dog for scout training.

The first phase of training comes at Lackland Air Force Base, Tex. Here the dogs undergo extensive training to determine whether or not they are scout dog material.

First of all, the canine must be in good health, must not weigh less than 60 pounds and be between one and three yearsold. If the dog is selected for scout training, he is sent to the Army's Scout Dog Training School at Ft. Benning, Ga.

The selection of handlers for the dogs is as important as the selection of the dogs themselves. Experience has shown that handlers must have a friendly attitude toward dogs, patience and perseverance, physical endurance and exercise common sense.

At Ft. Benning the dogs undergo 12 weeks of intensive training with these men, who remain with the dogs throughout the entire cycle. The training is broken down into two parts. Basic obedience, the first phase, takes place during the first two weeks of the training. It is during this period the handler gets used to the dog, and the dog used to the handler. From the start, the man must establish himself as the boss or the dog's chances of excelling as a competent scout dog are threatened.

The superiority is sustained by teaching the dog to obey such basic commands as "heel, sit, down, stay and crawl." This is done by the use of the hand-sign and voice. At the end of two weeks, the second phase of training is begun; it involves ten weeks of field instruction. The basic obedience learned during the first two weeks is not entirely forgotten, as the dogs are continually refreshed on previous commands throughout the cycle.

The purpose of the field instruction is to teach the handler and dog to work as a team in alerting others to enemy presence. Also, the dog must be taught to give only a silent warning, since barking would alert the enemy.

During the ten week period, the dog and handler are exposed to every type of condition they will encounter in the jungle areas of Vietnam. For the first few weeks the dogs are taken on patrols during daylight hours until they become proficient enough to be introduced to night-time working conditions. During the night training phase, the handlers learn to place a greater reliance on the dog's abilities.

Another phase of the training includes three days spent in a simulated Viet Cong village. Here the dogs are able to operate under the same conditions they would find in a real enemy village.

The final step of specialized training comes in the eleventh week. Each team must go through an Operational Readiness Test (ORT), where they are subjected to simulated combat conditions. They are required to demonstrate their proficiency in overcoming natural obstacles, scouting rice paddies, swamps, caves and tunnels, working from a boat, and scouting through villages and jungles.

Each team is graded by a qualified instructor during ORT to determine if the dog or handler need additional training. In a few cases some dogs have to be recycled. The final decision is left up to the chief instructor, who after confering with his other instructors, decides who makes the grade and who doesn't. All the instructors are qualified dog handlers themsel-

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

ves, and have spent a tour of duty in Vietnam as a scout dog handler.

Bien Hoa Air Base is the next stop for both handler and dog. In most cases the two do not come to Bien Hoa together, unless it is a unit move. The reason for this is that some dogs have to stay behind for additional training. Also, there are already dogs in-country waiting for handlers.

When the handlers reach Bien Hoa they receive another dog, which will be theirs for the rest of their Vietnam tour. Many seem to think a dog will not listen to the commands of a new handler, but this is not the case with competent scout dogs.

After two weeks of in-country training at the Air Base, the dog and his new master are old friends, and each knows just what to expect from each other. The training is a refresher of what was originally accomplished at Ft. Benning, and helps the team adapt more readily to their environment.

From Bien Hoa, the scout dog teams are assigned to a scout dog platoon. Teams designated for the 41st Infantry Scout Dog Platoon are sent to Lai Khe, where they will assist infantry units of the Big Red One in tactical operations against hostile forces. They are employed to detect ambush sites and enemy caches of weapons, food and ammunition.

After the teams reach Lai Khe and become settled in their new habitat, they undergo more training to familiarize themselves with the terrain in which they'll be working.

"This is necessary," explained Sergeant Russell, "because the area around Lai Khe is different from such areas as the Delta region, where there is a great deal of water." He added the final check is to make sure the dog and handler are 100 per cent ready to participate in a patrolling activity. Additional drill will be required if they are not.

If a dog picks up an unfamiliar scent while on patrol, he will give an alert, which the handler will pass on to the company commander or platoon leader. There is no special method by which all dogs alert. Each dog is an individual in his manner of alerting. Therefore, the handler must observe the dog's behavior crefully so he does not miss its signal of alert.

Sergeant Gordon Moen of Meskegon, Mich., a handler with the scout dog platoon, admits when his dog "Has So" gives an alert, the dog's hair will stand up on its back.

Another dog called *Major* has the strange habit of crossing his ears on an alert, while *Eric* puts on an acrobatic act by walking on his hind legs.

"Everytime the dog becomes alert, the area is checked out for mines, personnel and boobytraps," said Sergeant Grimes. "These dogs are especially good at detecting ambushes," he added.

Such was the case with Sergeant Jonnie D. Foster of Belhaven, N.C., and his dog *Duke*. While working as pointmen for Company A, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, the scout team alerted the company just in time to keep the men from walking into an enemy ambush.

Take me to your litter; I'll see your leader later

Photo by PFC Anthony Hallas

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

PFC Paul Cooper of Joplin, Missouri, is guided by his scout dog "Duke" to a suspicious location.

Because the dog had acted quickly in alerting First Lieutenant Anthony F. Romans, A Company's commanding officer, the soldiers were able to take good defensive positions before the unavoidable enemy contact.

In a letter of commendation from Lieutenant Romans, the two were singled out for "clearly demonstrating the high level of proficiency that can be rendered by scout dog teams."

Sergeant Russell pointed out that many times while working in tall grasses, the dogs will jump up above the growth to get the scent. "A scout dog is not able to distinguish between an enemy force or a weapons cache," he added, "but the dog gives out with a stronger alert the greater the fine."

Scout dogs, in many cases, are able to detect the enemy hiding underwater. If the enemy is using a reed to breathe through, the canine will have little trouble picking up the scent.

Whenever a dog is injured in the field and has to be taken out of action, he is treated much the same way as a human casualty would be. If the injury is serious and requires surgery, the dog will be taken to the Army Animal Clinic at Ton Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon where a well-trained veterinarian takes over.

In most instances, however, a veterinary technician is assigned to each scout dog platoon. He is able to treat minor illnesses and injuries. The majority of the injury cases can be treated on the spot, permitting the dog to continue its mission. As with soldiers, medical records of the dogs are also kept up to date.

Most of the animals weigh between 70 and 75 pounds. They are well fed and groomed by their handlers, who have the full responsibility of careing for the dog.

The handlers take care of their dogs 24 hours a day. They do everything but sleep and eat with them to insure the animals' well-being. As a result of this close association, man and dog become quite attached to one another.

"My dog is the greatest," affirms Sergeant Foster; "he's like a brother."

Sergeant Moen explains that every dog handler feels the same toward his animal. "A dog is as good as a weapon," he said.

When the dogs are not in the field they are usually training, which could involve putting enemy decoys ahead of the dogs for special alert drills. The dog's high standards are constantly being honed to near perfection.

The life of a Scout Dog is a rough one, but as many units will testify—a scout dog can mean the difference between life and death.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Vietnam Battles

Vietnam Battles 46-50 cover the Division's actions from January through June 1969.

Combat Art by 1Lt. Dennis Lee

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

During the first six months of 1969, the 1st Infantry Division conducted extensive reconnaissance-in-force and ambush operations in the TRAPEZOID and IRON TRIANGLE, the jungle areas northwest of Lai Khe, and the An Loc area. Meanwhile, pacification operations were being conducted in such villages as Chanh-Luu and An Dien, while ARVN and Big Red One soldiers opened the road to Song Be.

The major battles during the six-month period included an attack on Fire Support Base Oran on February 1. On that date, a few minutes past midnight, Oran received 80 rounds of 82mm mortar rounds. The 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, securing the FSB, returned fire with artillery, light fire teams and Army helicopter gunships. Thirty minutes later a massed enemy ground attack was launched against the base by an estimated reinforced enemy. Artillery and infantry engagements with the enemy accounted for 24 NVA killed. A captured enemy weapons cache included a 50 caliber machinegun tripod, one 82mm mortar tripod, two AK-47 rifles, one light machinegun, eight rocket-propelled grenade rounds and 10 Chicom machineguns.

During the next few weeks, the 3d Brigade detected deployment of VC and NVA main force units, specifinally the 7th NVA Regiment, in the intermediate staging areas in the northwestern portion of the Iron Brigade's tactical area of interest. The units were believed to be staging in preparation for the widespread coordinated offensive targeted against the Saigon area.

February 23 marked the initial phase of the enemy's Winter/Spring Offensive. Enemy attacks were mainly diversionary attacks by fire against friendly installations to allow the southward deployment of VC and NVA units.

Sporadic contacts and attacks by fire continued through March until a major operation, nicknamed *Atlas Wedge*, commenced on March 18.

For sixteen days, armored vehicles swept through the trees northwest of Lai Khe. The actions accounted for 421 enemy dead and 16 detainees.

An operation nicknamed *Atlas Power* on April 10, also in the forest area, added a series of sporadic contacts which further denied the enemy the use of normally accessible avenues of approach, storage and rest areas.

On April 18, an operation called *Plainsfield Warrior* swung into action to search out and destroy VC and NVA infrastucture operating in areas of operation Mushroom and Trapezoid. Results of the five-day operation were 38 VC killed, 29 detainees, one Hoi Chanh and 29 weapons captured.

Fire Support Base Gela was attacked on May 12 when the enemy launched a mortar and rocket attack, followed closely by a ground assault against the base. Nearly 50 enemy were killed in the encounter and 14 AK-47 rifles, an 82mm mortar launcher and 13 bangalore torpedos were included in a captured weapons cache.

Big Red One elements and OPCON units scored another victory, May 23, when the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry (Mech.) of the 1st Brigade began a three-day confrontation outside the village of Minh Duc. During the next few days, the enemy body count climbed to 178 killed as the 1st Division continued to sweep the areas of operation. Artillery, helicopter gunships and U.S. Air Force tactical air strikes supported the ground troops.

Several days of bitter fighting in the An Loc and Quan Loi areas started on June 6. At the end of the fighting, nearly 500 enemy had been killed.

On June 10, President Richard M. Nixon announced 25,000 troops would be redeployed from Vietnam. On June 15 the announcement was made that an estimated 16,000 troops from the Army's 9th Division and the 3d Marine Amphibious Force would be the first American forces to leave Vietnam.

In the midst of the announcements, action flared Again June 19 and 20 when troopers of the 1st Division and the 11th ACR killed 78 enemy in the An Loc and Quan Loi area.

The following pages describe the battle action in detail.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

ATLAS WEDGE

VIETNAM BATTLES—46

On March 18, the Big Red One joined with the 25th Infantry Division and the 1st Cavalry Division (AIRMOBILE) in a joint operation northwest of Lai Khe. The operation was nicknamed Atlas Wedge.

Elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR), under operational control of the 1st Infantry Division, together with the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, repeatedly assaulted fortified enemy bunkers through the heavily wooded area with their rumbling tracks.

The action accounted for 421 enemy dead and 16 detainees. American casualties were 22 killed and 100 wounded.

The operation was initiated to destroy elements of the 7th NVA Division operating the heavily wooded area.

The 16-day series of armored sweeps ended April 3 with the dismantling of FSB Doc. The base had been hacked out of the jungle-laced eastern edge of the woods during the first days of the operation.

Significant contact was made at first light on March 30. The 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, readying her assault columns for a free wheeling blitz of the southern part of the forest, encountered contact that developed into the major confrontation.

As an engineer element was preparing a creek bed on the southern edge of the woods for the installation of an Armor Vehicular Launched Bridge (AVLB), spotters saddled on the waiting armor observed three enemy soldiers running along the woodline 200 to 300 meters north. Just as the tanks opened up with high explosive rounds and streams of 50 caliber fire, an exploding rocket-propelled grenade near the launching

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Reacting immediately to the situation, Lieutenant Colonel William C. Haponski, commanding officer of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, discontinued launching operations and sent Charlie Troop wheeling headlong to the north in an attempt to interdict the fleeing enemy.

The double column of armor hooked into the main enemy force after making a westerly turn and immediately came under fire from both sides of the road.

Captain James L. Selsor, commanding Charlie Troop, ordered his tanks into a "herring bone" formation. Each vehicle in the two columns turned at 35 degree angles to the direction of movement, thus enabling deployment of both machine guns and main cannon.

Captain Selsor continued with a personal report on the battle contact: "We got on line heading south, and the tank company came up behind us. They got on line heading south so at this time they were on my left flank. The forces we saw running through the woods before we had turned across the creek were platoon size. When we turned west, I actually believe we cut them in half. That's why we received fire on both sides."

When a report was radioed-in that 20 to 30 enemy were fleeing southward, the two-troop line of tanks jumped off like a baying hound.

The left half of the iron tide was hit by a screen of rocket-propelled grenades fired from low silhouetted, fortified bunkers. Bravo Troop, lingering behind the two-troop wall, was passed through the disabled flank with all guns blazing, but she too abruptly smacked into a second wall of rocket-propelled grenades. Though sustaining casulaties, the troop co ntinued to attack.

The enemy force was now caught in the squeezing sides of a collapsible box, with Bravo Troop to the north, Charlie Troop on the west, an open stream on the east and air strikes and artillery to the south.

Colonel Haponski first swept Charlie Troop from west to east against the grain of the forest while the 50 caliber machineguns pounded slugs into the overhead protection of the bunkers and the tank crews lobbed grenades into bunker openings.

Bravo Troop then rolled across the wake of the first run, effectively catching the enemy force in an armored cross-sweep.

The number of enemy killed totaled 90 before darkness stymied the operation.

In a continued effort to contain the enemy in the area northwest of Lai Khe, on April 10 the Big Red One initiated a five-day operation nicknamed *Atlas Power*. The action was characterized by a combined infantry and armor attack into the heavy jungle following an extensive series of B-52 strikes.

Task Force Quarter Cav included Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry; Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor; Delta Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry (AIRMOBILE); 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, and the 1st Platoon of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry.

The 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry and the 4th Battalion, 9th ARVN Regiment established blocking positions to preclude enemy movement out of the cordon. While only sporadic contact was made in the wooded area, the operation further denied the enemy use of normally accessible avenues of approach, storage and rest areas.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

An Eagle-flight jump insertion into a battle area.

PLAINSFIELD WARRIOR

VIETNAM BATTLES—47

Three days after the conclusion of Operation *Atlas Power*, the Big Red One started another operation, this one called *Plainsfield Warrior*, April 18. The week-long operation was conducted to search out and destory Viet Cong and North Vietnamese infrastructure activity in areas of operation MUSHROOM and TRAPEZOID.

Elements of four battalions participated in the operation to cordon an area 18 kilometers west of Lai Khe. The *Plainsfield* operation began with a combined infantry-armored assault from 13 kilometers west of Ben Cat by Task Force 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, and from seven kilometers west of Ben Cat by Task Force 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry. The 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry inserted in the northern portion of the cordon and blocked an area 19 kilometers west of Lai Khe. The 2nd Battalion, 26th Infantry conducted a combat assault near Xom Ben Bong and about two kilometers south of Duong Lang, maintaining the western portion of the cordon.

A significant contact on April 19, six kilometers north of Minh Thanh by Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, resulted in two Viet Cong killed and nine detainees. In addition, 92 bunkers, 2,355 pounds of rice and 1,000 pounds of medical supplies were found.

On April 22, the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry and 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry assembled for deployment by air from Fire Support Base *Aachen* into a seal of Ben Chua at 10 p.m. The effort was in conjunction with the 4th Battalion, 9th ARVN Regiment.

Responding to information in relation to enemy activity in the village, a night insertion by UH-1D aircraft was conducted. Utilizing the aircraft illumination of helicopter gunships and flareships, and the assets of two assault helicopter companies, 1300 personnel were inserted to complete the seal of the village at 3:15 a.m. Vietnamese search forces were moved at 7 a.m. into the village by CH-47 aircraft.

Results of the seal of Ben Chua were 13 Viet Cong killed, six enemy detainees, two draft dodgers, five Viet Cong infrastructure and five weapons captured.

Overall results of Operation *Plainsfield Warrior* were 38 Viet Cong killed, 29 enemy detainees, one Hoi Chanh and 29 weapons captured.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

ASSAULT ON FSB GELA

VIETNAM BATTLES—48

It had just stopped raining at Fire Support Base Gela when First Lieutenant Jack Crump of Salligent, Ala., was returning to his bunker after having completed a line check.

The day before, information reports at 3d Brigade Headquarters in Lai Khe warned of an impending enemy attack on the base.

It was 2 a.m., May 12, when suddenly the night seemed to catch fire. "The enemy launched a mortar and rocket attack, followed closely by a ground assault," said First Lieutenant Victor C. Pangle, Chattanooga, Tenn., commanding officer of Charlie Company. Men occupying two listening posts, were able to dash for the safety of Gela just ahead of the attackers.

Lieutenant Crump, a platoon leader with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, was first to spot several enemy troopers approaching the base perimeter wire. He alerted his mortar crewmen, who stopped the sappers 50 meters from the wire. Nine of the enemy were killed.

Meanwhile, Company A mortar crews returned incoming mortar fire round for round. "Cobra" gunships sped to the area and five artillery batteries turned their tubes toward Gela's perimeter. Two Cobras swapped fire with an enemy 51mm machinegun position.

Aerial view of Fire Support Base Gela. SP4 Chris Parsons

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

A field medical aidman attached to Charlie Company, Duran ran from bunker to bunker treating the wounded and supplying others with additional ammunition. Another aidman, Specialist 5 Richard Griffin of Chicago was awarded a Bronze Star Medal for his similar roll in the same action.

Captured was a weapons cache consisting of an 82mm mortar launcher and two base plates, one light Chicom machinegun, one rocket-propelled grenade launcher, 15 rocket-propelled grenade rounds, two pistols, 13 bangalore torpedos, 35 hand grenades, a 51mm machinegun mounting, small arms ammunition, six rounds of recoilless rifle rounds and 20 rounds of 60mm ammunition.

1 Lt. Jack Crump radios in report on enemy movement.

Black Lion's captured weapon's cache at FSB Gela.

Before the blitz had a chance to damage positions on the fire support base, the enemy was routed by U.S. firepower.

During a sweep of the area the next day, 30 enemy bodies were discovered, and nine more were added to the count later when they were found by a recon patrol. They had been killed when a 155mm howitzer round landed in their mortar position.

"It was a combined effort and we had good support all the way," cited Lieutenant Pangle. "The enemy never got closer than 20 meters from the wire," he added. "Straight down the line, every man remained cool and collected."

Specialist 4 Edward Duran of Encino, Calif., was awarded a Silver Star Medal for his actions during the assault. The presentation was made in the field by Brigadier General Albert H. Smith, acting 1st Infantry Division commander.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

AN LOC I

VIETNAM BATTLES—49

The 1st Infantry Division and Rebublic of Vietnam Regional Forces, supported by gunships, artillery and Air Force tactical aircraft, killed 178 enemy soldiers during actions seven kilometers south of An Loc in Binh Long Province, May 23 to 25. The actions were in support of the TOAN THANG Offensive. American losses were six killed and 58 wounded in the three days of fighting.

A Republic of Vietnam Regional Force (RF) outpost, southwest of An Loc, began receiving the first of an estimated 100 rounds of mixed 60mm and 82mm mortar fire at 4:45 a.m. The mortar fire was followed shortly by a ground attack by an unknown size NVA force. As action continued, other RF troops reinforced and engaged the enemy.

At 9:30 a.m., the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry (Mech.) of the 1st Brigade, moved to the area and engaged the enemy in the start of the three-day confrontation. A short while later, other mechanized infantry units from the battalion reinforced and also contacted an unknown size enemy force occupying bunkers in the same general area. Fighting continued throughout the morning and into the afternoon with U.S. Army helicopter gunships and artillery, and U.S. Air Force tactical air strikes supporting the combined ground forces.

"We were told to move out into the wooded area and bamboo and knock out some 50 caliber machine-guns which were firing at out helicopters," said Private First Class Paul Estes of Phoenix, Ariz., a member of

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Reconnaissance Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry (Mech.).

"We spotted men running back and forth from 12 bunkers, and began firing on the enemy positions to draw their fire," he added. "Then we withdrew about 50 meters to permit air strikes in that area."

Estes pointed out that after the last of three air strikes, his unit advanced again only to find the enemy too well entrenched to take the bunkers without more ground support.

Colonel Michienzi wasted no time in calling air strikes and artillery on the enemy force. By the time supporting tanks and armored personnel carriers arrived, the NVA positions had been blasted to the point of being easily overtaken.

"We had hopes of paying back the debt we owned Charlie and Bravo from the day before," said Specialist 5 Larry Dumse, a member of Recon Platoon. "But, by the time we got to the contact site, the conflict was just about over," added the Galesburg, Ill., soldier.

At the end of the second day's activity, a sweep of the area revealed 96 enemy killed. One detainee was apprehended. U.S. losses were listed as two killed and 46 wounded.

On the third and final day of confrontations, Bravo Company made contact again just north of where it had encountered hostile fire the day before. This time Bravo Company was supported by elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. Both units received small arms and 50 caliber machine gun fire. Alpha Company later moved in to support the actions.

The contact was apparently initiated when some of the NVA elements returned to their emplacements during the night in hopes of recovering some of their lost equipment. Throughout the day, the NVA were spotted moving in and out of the wooded area.

Contact that day resulted in 32 NVA killed and one enemy suspect detained U.S. losses were two killed and 12 wounded. Captured weapons at the end of the three-day period included two 12.7 mm machine-guns, two 75 mm and three 57 mm recoilless rifles, one 60 mm mortar tube and base plate, seven rocket-propelled-grenade launchers, and 23 AK-47 assault rifles.

Major Edward Grubbs, Carlisle, Penn., S-2 officer for the 1st Brigade, asserted the enemy the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry (MECH) tackled the first day was an anti-aircraft support company. "This was evidenced because two anti-aircraft guns were captured and one detainee identified himself as an ammunition bearer for one of the guns," he added.

"Contact the following days was initiated by battalions of the 141st Regiment, which were instructed simply to conduct ambushes," explained the Major.

As a result of the action in the Binh Long Province, Major General Orwin C. Talbott, 1st Infantry Division commander, later presented 50 medals for heroism and bravery to soldiers during two impact award ceremonies at Fire Support Base Thunder IV.

When Charlie Company arrived to provide the additional fire power, they approached on the rear of the heavily fortified bunker emplacements. The enemy suddenly found themselves caught between two advancing elements. A few hours after Recon Platoon had first been fired upon, the bunkers were permanently silenced.

Meanwhile, Alpha Company had started separate contact about a mile north of where Recon had received fire. First Lieutenant Richard Mailing, Bangor, Maine, asserted the NVA had apparently intended to ambush them. The Lieutenant was on the lead armored personnel carrier (APC) when Alpha encountered the hostile fire.

"Their ambush backfired when we directed all our firepower at them," said the Lieutenant. "After we laid down the suppressive fire, designated men left the APCs and threw grenades into the bunkers' firing ports," he explained.

Contact was lost when the remaining enemy withdrew and a sweep of the area was completed at 3 p.m. The bodies of 53 NVA killed in the engagement were found. U.S. casualties were two killed and none wounded. RF were very light, with no fatalities.

On the second day of action, Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Companies of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry (Mech.) again swept the general area of the past day's contact, each unit having its own route.

As Charlie Company made its way through the dense woods and jungle growth, they made contact briefly with an NVA ambush patrol. The attack appeared to be only a delaying tactic of a forward guard element.

Almost simultaneously, Bravo Company was hit by an unknown size enemy force, located about two kilometers north of Charlie Company's position at the time.

An element of Charlie company proceeded immediately to aid elements of Bravo. Alpha Company, and a command contingent, including the Recon Platoon under the command of Lieutenant Colonel James Michienzi, battalion commander, from Robinsdale, Minn., also moved in to support Bravo.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

AN LOC II VIETNAM BATTLES—50

Several days of bitter fighting, centered in the An Loc and Quan Loi areas, raged June 6 through 9 in one of the largest enemy contacts for the Big Red One since the Loc Ninh Offensive of 1968. Action at the end of the fighting accounted for the deaths of nearly 500 VC and NVA. Approximately 300 enemy rockets and mortars were expended during the fighting.

An Loc, Quan Loi, Ben Cat, Lai Khe, Loc Ninh and Phu Loi were target areas for the enemy's explosive assault.

June 6th, the 25th Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion of Normandy, signaled the start of the battle action. The major confrontation began at dawn when a barrage of rockets and mortars simultaneously impacted on the 1st Infantry Division installations.

The first and largest contact came two and one-half miles northwest of An Loc when elements of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry engaged an estimated company-size NVA force fighting from a well fortified bunker complex. The allies raked the area with small arms and automatic weapons fire as the enemy returned fire with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms. Artillery, light fire teams, tactical air strikes and additional ground troops supported the action. At the end of the battle, 115 enemy had been killed.

While the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry completed the job of destroying enemy emplacements, 3d Brigade elements and elements of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry drove the NVA deeper into the rubber tree area to a point 11 miles south of An Loc. The enemy was battered with mini-gun fire, artillery and 50 caliber machinegun fire. At the end of the engagement another 38 enemy had been killed.

Meanwhile, 1st Brigade elements at Quan Loi stopped an enemy attempt to probe the perimeter strength of their base camp. Counter mortar fire and Rebel gunships accounted for 14 VC killed and five enemy suspects were detained.

Trouble flared again south of An Loc as the 2nd Battalion, 9th ARVN Regiment and 1st Division troops moved into the area and killed 12 VC after high explosive and automatic weapons fire was exchanged.

During a fourth contact with the enemy about a mile northwest of the ARVN encounter, the two Regional Forces companies, operating in the 1st Brigade's tactical area just outside An Loc, killed 36 and captured one of the enemy. Included in a captured weapons cache were nine AK-47 rifles, three CKC rifles, one 60mm mortar tube with base plate, two B-40 rocket launchers and a Chicom radio and telephone. Several high explosives were also confiscated.

An Armored Personnel Carrier sweeps a rubber tree area south of An Loc.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Helicopters carry 1st Division elements into Fire Support Base Thunder II.

The day's last major engagement ended when 18 VC were killed by 1st Brigade elements near Fire Support Base Howard. An additional nine ene my were discovered in an early morning sweep the next day.

On the second day, fighting raged again when two elements of the 2nd Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR), under operational control of the 1st Division, stormed into the jungle fives miles south of An Loc. Light fire teams, artillery and aerial rifle platoons reinforced the action. When the smoke had cleared from the battlefields, 95 NVA bodies were found.

Meanwhile, K Troop, 3d Squadron, 11th ACR killed three VC in a minor skirmish about ten miles southeast of An Loc. One mile east of that contact an additional seven NVA were killed by other elements of the 11th ACR.

Scattered actions involving the Black Lions of the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry accounted for the remainder of the enemy body count totalling 340.

During the final days of fighting, soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry (Mech.) and OPCON units dealt the final blow to the enemy as they moved into the area surrounding An Loc, killing 60 NVA. Thirty-six additional enemy were killed 1.5 miles east of An Loc, while other actions four miles southwest of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry engagement accounted for 24 more enemy deaths.

Fighting flared again on June 19, as elements of the Big Red One killed 46 enemy in the An Loc and Quan Loi areas. The largest contact in the action came four miles southwest of An Loc. K Troop, 3d Squadron of the 11th ACR, OPCON to the 1st Division, killed 33 VC and captured one detainee.

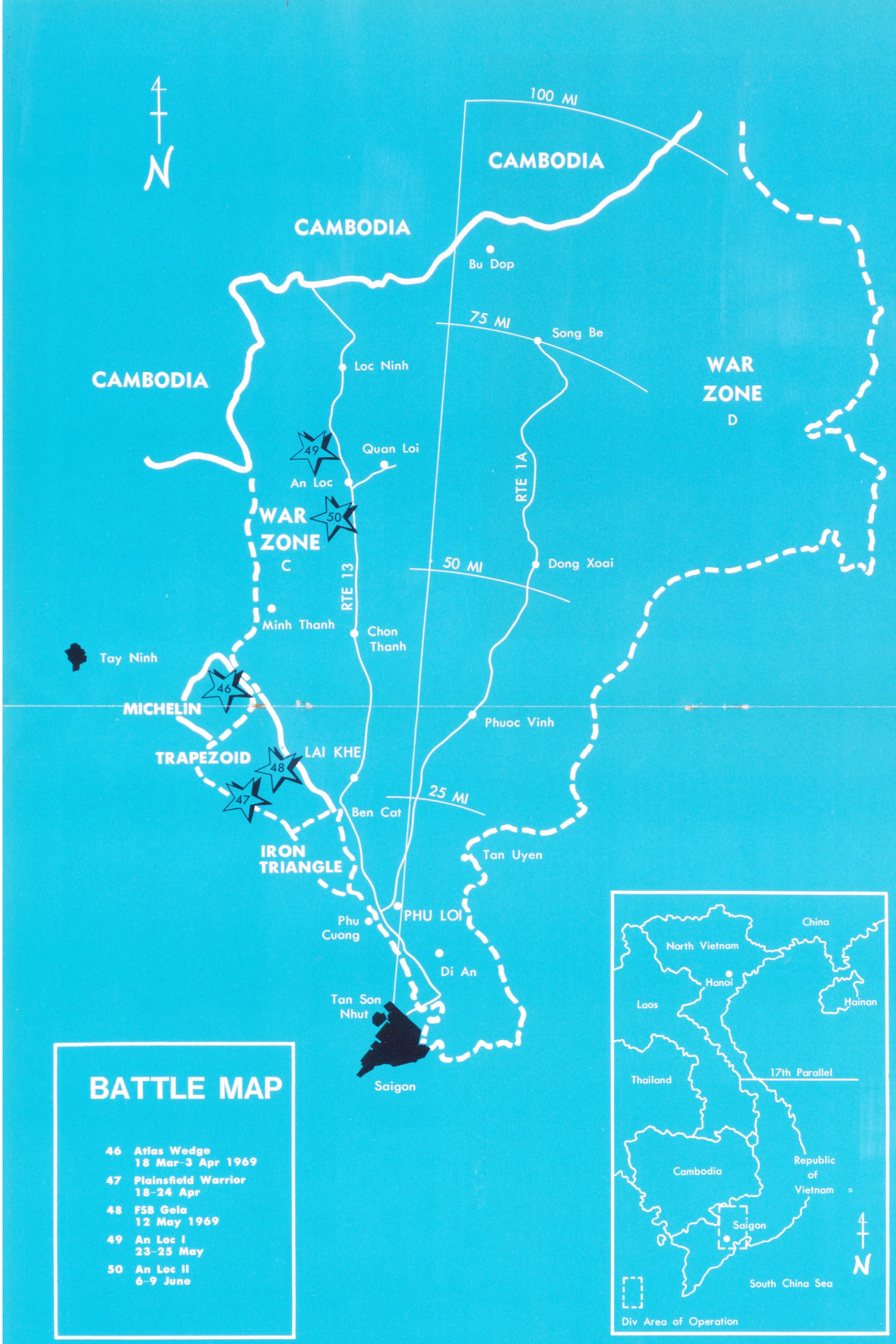
One June 20, fighting continued in the 1st Division's tactical area of operations as 16 enemy were killed and eight weapons were captured. Action began during the early morning hours when areas near Song Be and An Loc were bombarded with nearly 50 rocket and mortar rounds. After the initial enemy barrages, the Big Red One and OPCON units engaged the enemy again as Charlie Troop, 1st Squadron of the 11th ACR killed 11 VC and captured five AK-47 rifles.

Vietnamese units from the 52nd Rangers operating in the An Loc area killed three VC and captured several weapons, while Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry killed two more enemy, bringing the total enemy body count to 32.

As DANGER FORWARD magazine goes to press, the latest figures on the total First Division enemy body count for the month of June stood at 682 VC and NVA killed.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives



BATTLE MAP

46 Atlas Wedge
18 Mar–3 Apr 1969

47 Plainsfield Warrior
18–24 Apr

48 FSB Gela
12 May 1969

49 An Loc I
23–25 May

50 An Loc II
6–9 June

THE ROAD TO SONG BE

By 1Lt. Fritz Vietor

AND

Capt. Auburn Mitchell

The sight of a two-hundred vehicle ARVN convoy winding its way along the road from Phouc Vinh to Song Be was part of the reward the men who built the road received on June 15. A large number of the Big Red One and ARVN soldiers who participated in the five month task were also presented with the Vietnamese Civic Action Honor Medal by Tran Thien Khiem, Deputy Prime Minister of the Interior, Republic of Vietnam.

The awards ceremony climaxed five months of hot, hard, dangerous work for members of The First Division and OPCON units involved with re-opening the French-built road, closed in 1965 when heavy fighting broke out in the area. Work on the road began in mid-January as Rome plows from the 60th, 501st and 984th Land Clearing Companies of the 62nd Engineer Battalion started clearing 200 meter wide security swaths along both sides of the road. The plows harvested almost 10,000 acres of dense jungle along the 90 kilometer span of road.

Elements of the 1st Battalion, 28th infantry, and later the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry, reinforced with a mechanized element, provided security for the Rome plows as they worked from Phouc Vinh to Dong Xoai. Security for the plows between Dong Xoai and Song Be was provided by Headquarters, B and C Companies, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry (Mech.). Artillery coverage for the operation was provided by Battery D, 1st Battalion, 5th Artillery and Battery B, (—) 8th Battalion, 6th Artillery.

While the American units were engaged in clearing the 200 meter strips along the road, members of the 301st Engineer Battalion (ARVN) were busy upgrading the existing road and replacing bridges and culverts that had been destroyed by the Viet Cong. The 5th Division (ARVN) provided security for the 301st workers as they frequently ranged ahead of the Rome plow operators first clearing the shoulders of the road then beginning their repair work. According to

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam

RRMRC Digital Archives

Lieutenant Colonel Rodney E. Cox, 1st Engineer commanding officer, the 301st Engineers did a "very professional job of upgrading the road."

Major Louis E. Stout, 1st Engineer Battalion executive officer, who was coordinating engineer activities on the road daily, also had praise for the ARVN engineers, particularly their commanding officer, Major No Le Thien. "He graduated from our engineer course at Ft. Belvoir, Va., and applied everything he learned to make this road building operation a success." Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth G. Cassels, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry commanding officer, asserted that Major Thien's battalion "is one of the finest engineer battalions working in Vietnam today." Colonel Cassels also spoke highly of the American soldiers working on the project. "These men have put in long hours each day and have done a magnificent job," he said.

Enthusiasm of the project ran high as indicated by Lieutenant Colonel Ronald F. Ochis, 1st Brigade executive officer. "I think its one of the biggest pacification projects undertaken by the 1st Infantry Division. The people will start timber hauling and woodcutting along the road and once security is established, the timber industry will expand. The road will open up the area so commerce can flow again as it did before it was closed in 1965."

"200 meter wide security swathes were cut" by the Rome Plous.

LTC Kenneth G. Cassels, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry; and Maj. Allen L. Griffith, S-3 of 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, were among those receiving the Civic Action Honor Medal.

Song Be and the immediate area is abundant in natural resources. So are villages along the winding roadway such as Dong Xoai and Bunard. Vital products to the economy of Vietnam such as timber, charcoal, rubber and rice abound here.

Song Be rubber production virtually ceased since the importing and exporting of goods became so expensive. Airways and waterlines were the only means for villagers to carry their goods to market. Likewise, finished products and foodstuffs could only be shipped by air.

Importing these necessary commodities increased the prices on local markets and skyrocketed the cost of living in the Song Be region.

The initial impact of the road to Song Be will be to lower this cost of living. It will take several months to show its effect because no substantial amount of goods will be brought in until Saigon merchants determine their movements will not be interdicted.

Politically, the road is bringing the villages closer together and a common bond links one villager to another. Opening the road to Song Be is a major step in the continuing pacification of Phouc Long Province and improvement of security by the the Government of South Vietnam.

The road to Song Be is an arrow of pacification. It will in time bring growth to the economy of the Vietnamese. The road brings isolated areas closer together now, and it enhances the villager's future for a share in Vietnam's freedom.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

THE COMBAT MEDIC

SUPPORT FOR THE LINE TROOPS

COMBAT ART BY 1LT. DENNIS LEE

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

BY SP5 JOHN MERRILL

"**The terrifying reality** of being in a combat situation is that we never know when we're going to be hit, and I never know when I'll be needed. I try my best to be prepared, but when Charlie does hit us I'm always scared."

Those are the words of Specialist 5 Joseph J. Brown, Baltimore, Md., a combat medic assigned to the 1st Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry. Specialist Brown, who holds the Silver Star medal awarded to him for gallantry in action, is a conscientious objector. As he puts it, he does not want to kill anyone, ". . . so a weapon is not at all needed when I'm doing my job as a medic."

How does a combat medic, and especially a conscientious objector, receive a valor award such as the Silver Star? It's not uncommon. According to Specialist Brown, his unit had been conducting a reconnaissance-in-force mission near Bien Hoa. As the men were moving into their RON (remain overnight) position, their pointman spotted three Viet Cong running into a woodline. The unit opened up on the enemy soldiers, killing all three. A search of the area was made, and a large bunker complex was discovered. It appeared that it had been used that same day so the company commander set up an ambush near the site in the hope that the VC would return.

They did.

At 2 a.m. the ambushers were hit with a barrage of RPG's and automatic weapons fire from several different directions. "It appeared that Charlie knew we were there all along," recalls Specialist Brown, "but was waiting for the chance to hit us. Everything happened so fast. Seven of our men were wounded in the first few minutes." As Brown was treating the wounded, the unit machinegunner was hit. Crawling through a hail of enemy automatic rifle fire and RPG rounds the medic began treating injured men. Then Specialist Browns' helment was hit by a piece of sharpnel from an exploding RPG round. Although stunned, he continued to administer first aid to the wounded throughout the night and the next day. Since the fire was so intense, an evacuation chopper was not able to get in to evacuate the wounded until the following afternoon. The medic's dedication to duty saved many of his fellow soldiers' lives.

Specialist Brown's actions are typical of the many combat medics assigned to the 1st Infantry Division. They come from all walks of life as civilians. Some were bricklayers and salesmen, students and clerks. Others have college degrees in business or teaching. Some even have pre-medical training and are working on a degree in medicine. They all, however, have one goal in common—they came to Vietnam to save lives.

After finishing basic combat training, the *Docs*, as many of the men have come to be known, went through 10 weeks of rigorous training in basic medical care at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Tex. Their schooling ranged from the routine of everyday hygiene to the more complicated subjects such as treatment for shock and heat exhaustion, administering vaccines, and resetting broken bones. Not only do they learn to treat the sick and injured, the combat medics also become walking pharmacies, Carrying everything from aspirin to water purification tablets.

Specialist 5 Carl F. Gable, Cedartown, Ga., is a combat medic with the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry. He is a member of the Pentecostal Church and, like Brown, is a conscientious objector. When he registered with Selective Service he filled out a form explaining his beliefs.

"When I registered," said Specialist Gable, "I realized that I had an obligation to serve in the Armed Forces, and I planned on doing my share. I feel that by being a combat medic I am saving someone's life and therefore I am serving the best way possible."

The men from Specialist Gable's unit also feel that he is doing the best job possible. While serving as a company medic on an operation near An Loc his company received intense rocket and small arms fire from an entrenched North Vietnamese unit.

Lt. Wille F. Johnson

A medivac dust-off is effected after a reconnaissance-in-force effort near Night Defensive Position Oran.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

A senior field combat medic treats a wounded soldier at Night Defensive Position Oran.

"We were pinned down so I had to crawl from position to position to check on casualties," he recalls. "One of the men in the lead platoon was hit, and when I heard the call for a medic, I crawled up to the front. The fire was so heavy I had to carry him back to the rear in order to work on him." After that Specialist Gable continued to treat the injured until an evacuation helicopter arrived. For his actions Specialist Gable received the Silver Star. He also holds the Bronze Star with V device, the Army Commendation Medal with V device, and the purple Heart.

Not all combat medics are conscientious objectors, but they have the same goal and the same dedication. When Specialist 4 Robert Battin, Martinsville, Ind., was drafted he volunteered to be a Special Forces medic. The former journalism student at Indiana University said the reason he wanted to be a medic was because he gets satisfaction out of doing his best to save lives. "I will use a weapon, however, if it is a matter of life or death," he added.

Even though Battin was not able to serve with the Special Forces, like most combat medics, he has had his share of action. While serving as a platoon medic for Company C, 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry, he experienced what he calls "my most severe test." His unit was attacked by a large group of NVA regulars at a night defensive position, but the attackers were driven off. The following morning the unit moved out from the position to search for enemy bodies and was hit again. "I really had a job treating our wounded because the other two medics were wounded in the first contact. I had only been in country for a couple of months," recalls Battin, "so I was broken in the hard way."

As soon as a medic finishes his ten-week training course at Fort Sam Houston he is normally sent directly to Vietnam. According to Specialist 6 Robert B. Jackson, Richmond, Va., the battalion aidman for the 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry, the individual is first assigned as a platoon medic, then works his way to company medic. After he has been on life for about seven months he is sent to the battalion aid station to finish his tour of duty.

First Lieutenant Hugh O. Evans, Seattle, a platoon leader with Company A, 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry, speaks highly of the medics assigned to his unit. He recalls the action near Loc Ninh on 28 and 29 November 1968 when the battalion killed 148 NVA regulars. "Our senior medic, Specialist 5 Norman Singleton of Statford, Tex., and Specialist 4 Wendall Jones of Los Angeles, my own platoon medic, both did a tremendous job. They seemed immune to shrapnel and bullets, and everything else! You could see tracers flying all around them and it didn't seem to bother them! Their main concern was for the wounded and the evacuation of the wounded. They saved a great many lives that day and I was very thankful to have had them in the area."

Two other combat medics, both from the 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry, were recently involved in fire fights and each man performed beyond the call of duty.

Specialist 5 Donald R. Bryson, Bethel Park, Pa., won two Silver Stars for his herioc actions while serving as a medic. He earned the first one when his unit became subjected to intense enemy automatic weapons and RPG fire. During the engagement three men from his unit were wounded. Specialist Bryson maneuvered

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

SP4 David Coughlin

Soldiers carry wounded comrades to a waiting helicopter.

through the heavy volume of fire, exposing himself repeatedly, and without regard for his own welfare, moved the three wounded soldiers to a position of security. The radio operator was then killed. Specialist Bryson unhesitatingly assumed the radio operator's duties and maintained contact with the company commander throughout the remainder of the fight. His actions saved many lives.

The combat medic won the Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster while he was with his company on a night ambush patrol which trapped an estimated VC company. Following the initial fire fight, a sweep team was sent out and almost immediately it began receiving heavy enemy fire. Several friendly casualties were taken. Specialist Bryson quickly moved out and after crossing a 100-yard open field began treating the wounded men. Even though under constant fire, he managed to continue treating them, and again was responsible for saving several lives.

Specialist 4 Herbert H. Taylor, Freeport, Ill., was serving with the *Rangers* as a medic when his unit was hit by an enemy force. In addition to treating the wounded, Specialist Taylor manned a machinegun to help his unit from being overrun. The company was on a mission to reinforce another company which was in heavy contact with a large VC force. Specialist Taylor's platoon went on line with a group of armored personnel carriers and began the advance on the enemy. As contact was made, two men on an APC to Specialist Taylor's left were wounded. He immediately climbed aboard the vehicle, treated the men for their injuries, and then took over the unmanned machinegun to help drive the enemy force into retreat.

For the combat medics of the 1st Infantry Division a tour in Vietnam is one of hard work and dedication to a cause. Their devotion to duty is without parallel and they are held in high esteem by all those with whom they work, and especially by those to whom they have rendered aid. The words of Captain Aubrey Wells, Mt. Sterling, Ky., battalion surgeon for the 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry, accurately reflect the feelings of all those who have come into contact with a 1st Infantry Division medic: "I have worked with many of them, and I consider each one a professional at his job—no matter what his background may be, he gets out there and puts out always."

While working in the field, the combat medic's chief concern is to give immediate aid to the soldier wounded in action, Ill, or otherwise incapacitated. The motto of the Medical Corps, "To Conserve the Fighting Strength" reflects the medic's main responsibility, and each one is fully aware of its meaning and importance. Many times the matter of life or death hangs in the balance, and the *Big Red One* medic is right there to tip that balance in favor of the soldier.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Do It Well... Do It Now... 121st Signal

By SP4 Mike Shanin

and

Maj. T.S. Silva

What's in a word? In Vietnam, a word can mean the difference between life and death . . . victory and defeat. In the 1st Infantry Division, the responsibility of getting the word through lies with the men of the 121st Signal Battalion.

The oldest and most decorated Signal battalion on the Army's rolls, the 121st has a proud and honored heritage going back to 27 July 1898. Presently commanding the 640 men of the battalion is LTC John C. Lain, who sums up the organizations mission as simply "to provide command and control communications for the Big Red One.

While this may sound simple, it is a complex task involving round-the-clock operations, seven days a week, through a far-flung communications network in the division's tactical area of operations. While presenting the third Meritorious Unit Commendation to the 121st Signal Battalion recently, MG Orwin C. Talbott, the Division Commander, stated that during the period June 1967 to May 1968, "Instantaneous and exact control, instantaneous and exact communications were a requirement of the division, and that was a requirement met in full by the 121st Signal Battalion". This was high praise for the hard working Signalmen who have participated in every division-sized operation and in numerous brigade and multi-battalion maneuvers since arriving in Vietnam.

At the hub of the division's communications network are the facilities supporting Division Headquarters at Lai Khe. A large VHF radio relay site terminates many 12 channel systems which connect the division's Main CP with its subordinate brigades and Support Command located at other base camps. From this site an intricate maze of cables and equipment distribute the hundreds of individual circuits used by headquarters personnel to control and administer the division.

In-country phone calls from the headquarters are generally handled by the *DANGER MAIN* switchboard where eleven men working in shifts around-the clock process nearly 4500 calls daily. Sergeant Johnny Odom of Atlanta, Georgia, a switchboard chief operator, explained that "60% of all phone calls at Lai Khe are handled by *DANGER MAIN* operators. In addition to providing local service at Lai Khe Base Camp itself, we also have the capability of placing calls to most any location in the country".

The nerve center served by the Big Red One's communications network is the *DANGER* Tactical Operations Center. The smooth operation of the DTOC is imperative if tactical units in the field are to function efficiently. This is the location at which vital information relative to operations is received and from where tactical missions to the division's fighting units emanate. The 121st Signal Battalion has the duel responsibility of installing and maintaining the communications equipment in the *TOC*. As Colonel Lain noted, "The *DTOC* must be the epitome of instantaneous communications. It is the only way the division can immediately respond to a field unit. The equipment in the *DTOC* must be in top shape all thet ime—and we are determined that it will be!".

The droning chatter of teletype machines provides the back-drop for the 1st Infantry Division's Commcenter, also at Lai Khe. According to CWO Larry Gross of Santa Rosa, California, who is the OIC, the Division Comm-center is "the means by which the Division Headquarters can pass and receive classified traffic to and from anyplace in the world". The 12

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

man staff keeps the commcenter in continuous operation and handles some 10,000 messages a month.

"Recording the pictorial history of the Big Red One is the mission of the 121st Signal Battalion's Photo Platoon", states SSG Alfred Camacho, the NCOIC. The Photo Lab shoots and processes 6–7,000 prints monthly in an attempt to capture the many faces of the war in the division's area. In addition to combat photography, the men of the Photo Platoon support the division's public information effort, and prepare passport and naturalization pictures.

Probably the biggest morale booster in the division, after pay call and the messhall, is the *MARs* program. Men of the 121st Signal Battalion at Lai Khe, Di An, and Quan Loi maintain a communications link from Vietnam to the U.S. which is used by more than 3,000 callers a month. These "men from MARs" work radio contacts with similar stations in the U.S. and with civilian ham operators. Receiving stations in the U.S. make phonepatches into the telephone company's long distance system and through this media the soldier in Vietnam can speak with his family and friends back home at relatively little cost.

The whole gamut of human emotions is often witnessed by *MARs* operators. "We see everthing in here," said Sgt Duane Leeper, NCOIC of the *MARs* Station at Di An. "We have guys who call home to ask their girl to marry them. Sometimes a guy calls and learns of a family tragedy. Some calls are funny; others quite sad. One time I got a registered letter from a woman who asked me to get her husband to call her. I located the guy, placed his call, and had him talking with his wife within half-an-hour of receiving the letter."

An innovation recently perfected in the Big Red One is to allow a man to call home from field locations, using radio-wire integration from the field to the *MARs* station at a base camp, then the standard radio call to the U.S. SP4 Les Keller, a *MARs* operator at Lai Khe, noted that "a soldier can call home from anywhere in the division area because of this system".

The 121st Signal Battalion operates in remote field locations, as well as base camps, supporting brigades and battalions in their tactical roles. Small signal centers are dispatched, with the tactical element supported, which provide multi-channel radio, radio teletype, and telephone services. Because of this versatility, many distant fire support bases are in constant contact with their higher headquarters. The 121st has operated such facilities at many fire bases with names of historic significance in the Vietnam war. . . . Chon Thanh, Tong Le Chon, Minh Thanh, Bandit Hill, Holiday Inn, Song Be, Loc Ninh, and Bunard to name a few. SP4 Bernard Wald of New York City, a VHF team chief supporting the 1st Bn, 16th Infantry on road clearing operations near Bunard considers his job "extremely important. The Infantry must be able to talk to control operations. We feel that we're providing them that ability.

Another vital link in the battalion's communications network is the mountaintop outpost of Nui Ba Den. Dwarfing other terrain features as far as the eye can see, the "Black Virgin Mountain" climbs to a peak of 3,200 feet. Atop the ominous slopes, a small crew of BIG RED ONE Signalmen maintain their lonely vigil relaying radio transmissions from fighting troops to their support facilities. Essentially, Nui Ba Den serves as an FM retransmission station relaying messages

SP5 Charles Gray

Alpha Company site of the 121st Signal Battalion at Lai Khe.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

SP5 David Walker

Major General Orwin C. Talbott, 1st Division Commander, presents meritorious unit citation to the 121st Signal Battalion. Accepting the award is LTC Claude S. Simpson Jr., former 121st Signal Commander.

A 121st Signal maintenance team works on a command and control communications console.

SP5 Dennis Viets

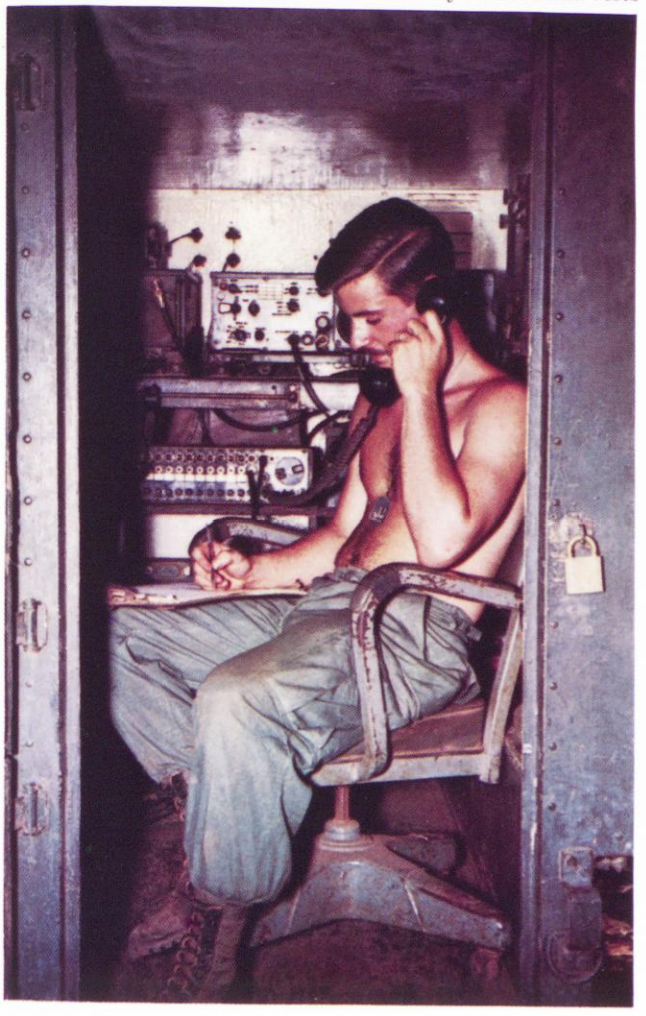
Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

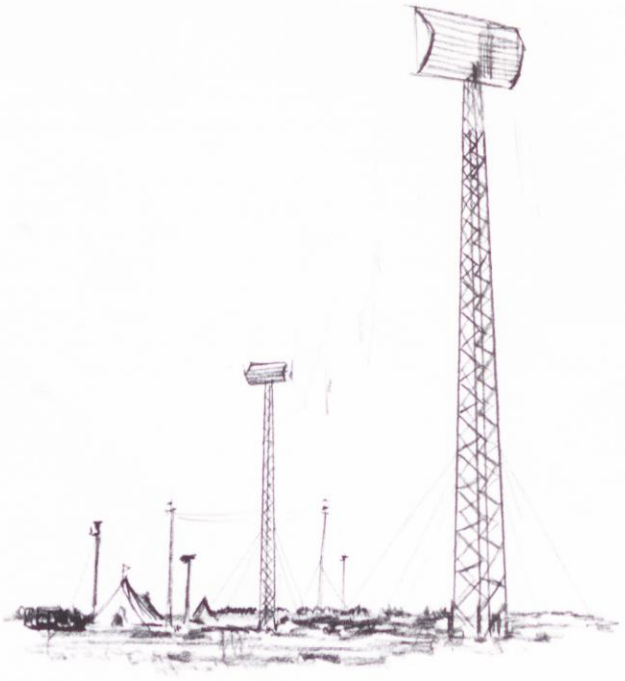
SP5 Charles Gray

A signal antenna installation at 1st Brigade Headquarters in Quan Loi.

SP5 Bernard Wald of New York City is the soldier's link to America in Quan Loi. By means of Radio Wire Integration, Wald places MARs telephone calls for the men to the continental United States from his communications booth at Quan Loi.

By SP5 Dennis Viets





Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

A 1st Division soldier stands guard over a signal communications installation. 121 Signal Photo

from 1st Brigade units in the northern regions of the division area to the division headquarters at Lai Khe. The site is also able to relay messages from units with small radios in the jungle to their parent units many miles away. Sgt Joe McGowan of Philadelphia sums up his feelings of his support mission. . . . "We can relay messages on three FM sets at any one time. Sometimes it gets pretty wild up here. We get calls at all hours of the day and night. But it gives us a good feeling to be able to help guys under fire. After awhile you really find your self getting involved. On many occasions when a unit calls in for help, you can hear the sounds of the battle raging in the background. It's like experiencing combat without being there."

Behind the operations of the battalion is a massive maintenance effort as one might imagine. SSG Robert Hartigan of Charleston, Mass., the Signal Maintenance NCOIC in Co A, 121st Signal Battalion feels that "although maintenance is a thankless job we get a lot of self-satisfaction out of it because we know that without our services the division could not communicate". The Signal Maintenance effort in the 121st requires the efforts of over 30 men who must provise on-site support in emergencies to the remote sites operated by the battalion.

By TOE, the 121st Signal Battalion is responsible for security of its sites. This requires a great amount of manpower on a daily basis at all installations manned by the battalion. Guard duty is oft-times boring, yet essential. Signalmen from the 121st are proficient in individual and crew served weapons just as the Infantrymen they support. On 13 May 1968, as Nui Ba Den's communications site was being overrun, it was a Signalman from the 121st who saved the day by directing air strikes and Med Evac helicopters which were coming to the rescue of that beleaguered outpost. For his gallantry, SP4 Anthony Stys, was awarded the Silver Star.

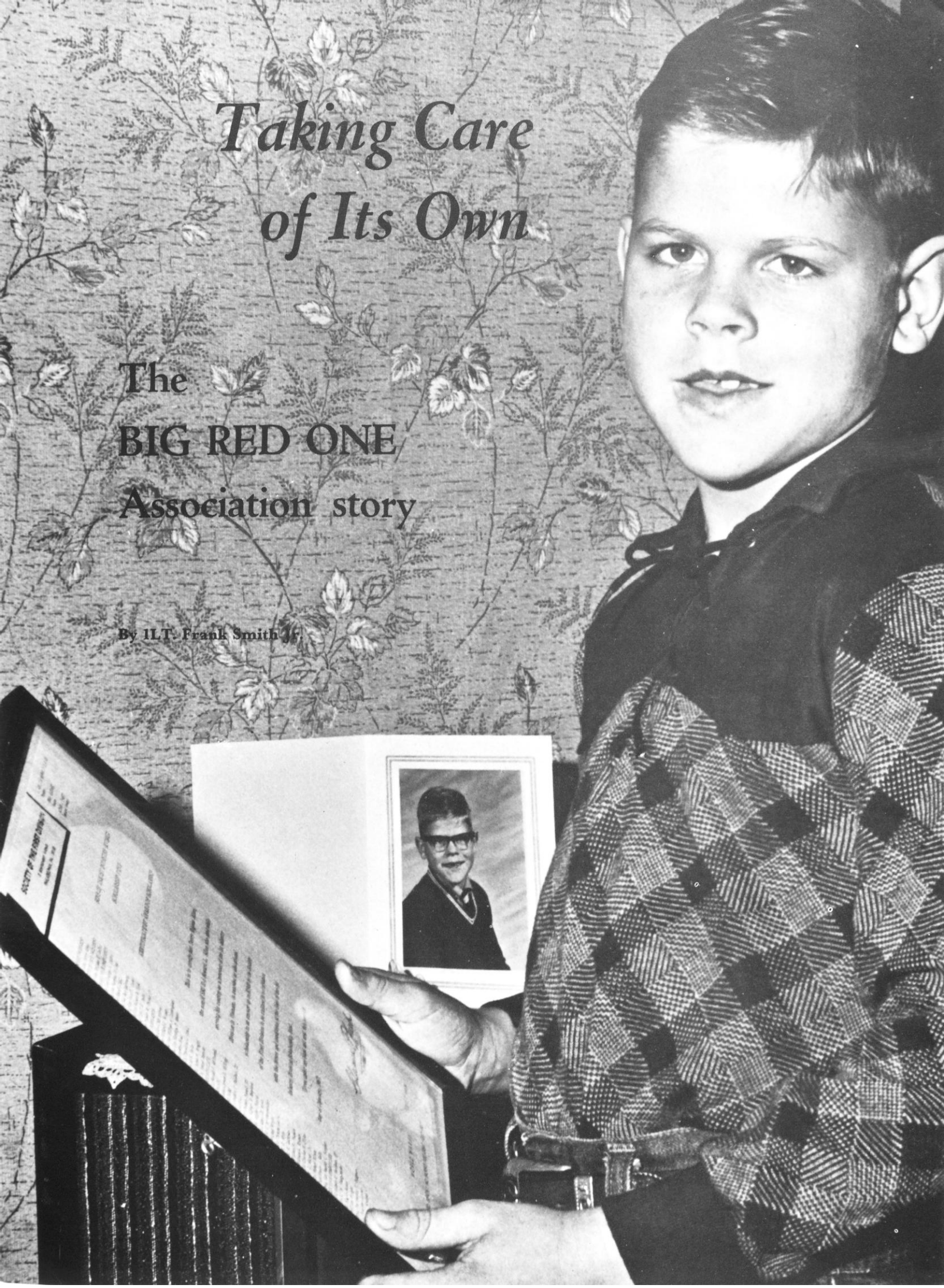
From the base camps to the boondocks, wherever the Big Red One. operates, men of the 121st Signal Battalion are there, keeping command and control communications operating. These men make the battalion's motto. . . . "DO IT WELL—DO IT NOW" . . . a living reality.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Taking Care of Its Own

The BIG RED ONE Association story

By 1LT. Frank Smith Jr.



Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

One of the unique aspects of a combat situation is the way in which men are drawn together. In war all men are brothers and throughout history there are countless striking examples of men sacrificing their lives to aid a comrade. These are relationships borne of necessity, but the bonds of friendship formed in combat are often the strongest and the longest lasting. The men of the 1st Infantry Division are no different in this respect than those in any other unit operating within a war zone, but in the Big Red One this comradeship is carried one step further.

The men of the 1st Division take pride in "taking care of their own," and they do this in a very special way. The members of the Big Red One have taken it upon themselves to help those who suffer most in any war, the children whose fathers will never return. With the establishment of the Sons of the First Division Scholarship Fund, the soldiers dedicated themselves to the task of helping to provide advanced education for the sons of their comrades who give their lives in Vietnam.

The establishment of the Scholarship Fund was largely the brainchild of Lieutenant General William E. DePuy, now Assistant Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. The idea was sparked by a letter written to General DePuy in June 1966 when he was commanding the 1st Division.

This letter, reprinted in part below, so touched the General that he had it published in the division newspaper, *The American Traveler*, and asked the reaction of the troops to the formation of a Scholarship Fund. The letter was written by the widow of Sergeant Rudolph Nunez, who died while in action with the 1st Infantry Division's Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol.

DEAR SIR, OFFICERS, AND MEN, "I write to you, with a broken heart and many lovely memories of my dearest husband. In my heart there is so much I would like to tell you. Please forgive me for it's so difficult to put down on paper what words alone cannot express. My husband was a proud man for many reasons, and like your men and many others in Vietnam, did not die in vain! My heart aches for my three young sons: Eric the oldest, who is four, one day will be told why his father did not return to us. He left and wanted so badly to return. They too will cry and their hearts will ache. But they will be ever so proud; their father died a hero, for all of us! I thank God that he blessed us with our three lovely boys, a legacy for Rudolph to be very proud of."

The troops response to their Commanding General's inquiry was immediate and generous. The hat was passed and in the first few months voluntary contributions amounted to over $163,000.

It became evident this was to be no token effort. The men of the BIG RED ONE recognized an opportunity to help overcome the tragic loss these children had suffered.

The Society of the 1st Division, the alumni organization of the Big Red One, also became deeply involved. To insure a tax exempt status for the Scholarship Fund, a Scholarship Foundation was created to administer the money. The Society of the 1st Division secured donations from society members, students, churches, clubs and civic organizations. Another major

U.S. Army Photo

Six year-old "Rocky" Leon Canfield, son of SFC Leon Canfield, killed in Vietnam while serving with the 1st Division's Engineers, is the recipient of a $1500 scholarship. The award was presented to the youngster by Major General Arthur W. Oberbeck and Brigadier General William M. Glasgow Jr., both of the U.S. Army Engineer Center at Ft. Belvoir, Va. Sergeant Canfield had been an instructor at the Engineer Center for more than five years.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Lieutenant General Robert H. York, Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, N.C., presents a BIG RED ONE scholarship to Anthony D. Morgan. The boy is the son of Mrs. John D. Morgan and the late Sergeant John Morgan of the 1st Division.

source of income in the early days of the fund was the Robert R. McCormick charitable trust. This trust, established by the will of the late Colonel Robert R. McCormick, publisher of the Chicago Tribune and a vice president of the Society of the 1st Division, added grants totaling $100,000 to the rapidly growing fund.

At the outset, there was only enough money to offer $1500 scholarship grants to the eldest sons of division members who gave their lives in Vietnam. As donations continued to come in, the fund reached the point where money began making money and it became possible to offer a scholarship to all sons. Scholarships are awarded on a completely democratic basis. Neither ability or aptitude enter into it, and the only stipulation is that the money be utilized for educational pursuits. A son is free to apply the grant to the college, technical school, or vocational school of his choice. The trustees of the Scholarship Foundation have adopted a very liberal policy in granting scholarships in unusual circumstances. For instance, one case involved a widow who had had two husbands killed in Vietnam. The men had been classmates at West Point. She had a boy by her first husband killed in Vietnam, who was not in the 1st Division. However, the second husband, who had adopted the son of the first husband, was a member of the Big Red One when he died. Both youngsters received scholarships.

Another case involved an eight year-old boy from the backwoods of Georgia. A retarded child, the trustees quickly permitted the use of the scholarship money so the youngster could attend a school for retarded children.

The Scholarship Fund has been in existence for three years, and members of the 1st Division have contributed more than $350,000. As of February 28, a total of 501 sons were eligible for scholarship grants, and 400 of that number had already received scholarships. This represents a committment of $750,000. The figure would convince any disbeliever the men of the Big Red One are serious about their special project.

What of the future? The immediate goal is to be able to offer scholarships to all children of all 1st Division soldiers killed in the war. Beyond that, the goal is to increase the amount of the scholarship grants. To facilitate these goals and to supplement the payline donations made by the troops, a private association, The *Big Red One Association in Vietnam*, has been established within the division. The sole purpose of the association is to support the scholarship fund by increasing the money going into the fund. The Association sells distinctive Big Red One items and donates all proceeds to the Scholarship Fund. The association also sponsors various fund raising projects. The Sons of the 1st Division Scholarship Fund has become big business. It represents a committment to their buddies by the men of the Big Red One that transcends normal layalties. The Scholarship Fund is an exciting and unique example of the spirit of the Big Red One.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

ONE YEAR OLDER...

THE BIG RED ONE

CELEBRATES ITS 52ND ANNIVERSARY

For more than half a century the 1st Infantry Division has given a long line of service to the United States and its allies. On June 8, the BIG RED ONE completed its 52nd year of service during anniversary ceremonies at 1st Division Headquarters in Lai Khe.

Fourteen general officers, representing both American and Vietnamese fighting efforts in the Republic of Vietnam, attended the ceremonies.

The event, held on the front lawn of division headquarters, began with the presentation of two Distinguished Service Crosses "for extraordinary heroism" to Big Red One soldiers, First Sergeants Ramiro Ramirez of C Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry; and Ira E. Whitaker of C Battery, 8th Battalion ,6th Artillery.

The medals, the nation's second highest award for valor, were pinned to the uniforms of the soldiers by General William B. Rosson, Deputy Commander, U.S. MACV.

From the fields of Cantigny in 1917 to the rubber of Vietnam in 1969, the *Fighting First* has traditionally proven its spirit as an outstanding combat division, and its dedication to duty and the distinction of being first are traditions of which the Big Red One has always been proud.

It was the first division to go overseas, first to land in France, first to meet the enemy, and first to enter a German city during World War I. In World War II, it was the first to reach Britian and first to land in North Africa, Sicily and France. It was the first infantry division to be deployed in Vietnam.

121 Signal Photo

General William B. Rosson, Deputy Commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, congratulates First Sergeants Ramiro Ramirez and Ira E. Whitaker after presenting them with Distinguished Service Crosses "for extraordinary heroism."

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

During World War I, the 1st Division was involved in six major battles: Lorraine, October 1917—April 1918; Cantigny (Picardy), May 1918, the first American victory; Montdidier-Noyon, June 1918; Sosisons (Aisne-Marne), June—July 1918; St. Mihiel, September 1918; and Meuse- Argonne, October—November 1918.

During World War II, the 1st Infantry Division was among the first to invade North Africa in November 1942. In July 1943, the Big Red One landed in Sicily, and in 37 days of continuous fighting pushed the enemy back in a counter-offensive. June 6, 1944 saw the Division land on Omaha Beach during D-Day Operations, led by the 16th Infantry Regiment. Advancing across France, the Division fought at St. Lo, Mortain and Mons. From December 1944 to February 1945, the Division took part in the *Battle of the Bulge*, Germany's desparate attempt to stem the allied advance.

General Talbott summed up the division's goal in Vietnam this way, "The Big Red One has a twofold mission in Vietnam; First, to defeat by direct combat enemy forces wherever they may be found; and second, to destroy the enemy's control over hamlets and villages, thereby making it possible for the Government of Vietnam to assume its rightful authority over the people of the land."

The Big Red One has always been a menace to the Communist forces, beginning with its first major operation fought in the havily wooded area northwest of Laikhe in November 1965, and continuing through the end of last month's vigorous action near An Loc where the enemy lost hundreds of men in battle.

In July 1965, the first troops deployed to Vietnam were elements of the 1st Infantry Division. The first major battle was *Bau Bang* in November of that same year. In 1966, Division operations included: *El Paso*, in which the Division took control of Highway 13; *Attleboro*, in which 845 Viet Cong were killed; and *Cedar Falls*, which was a penetration of the Communist stronghold in the IRON TRIANGLE. The Division's largest operation to date is *Junction City* in which 1,776 Viet Cong were killed. The largest single battle of the war was fought in late October and early November 1967 at Loc Ninh where 900 Viet Cong were killed. In 1968, the Division killed over 6500 enemy soldiers. It was on September 13, 1968, during some of the heaviest fighting, that enemy gunners shot down a command and control helicopter containing Major General Keith L. Ware, First Division Commander.

Major General Orwin C. Talbott, 1st Division Commander, honors First Sergeants Ramirez and Whitaker during 52nd Anniversary ceremonies of the BIG RED ONE in Lai Khe.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

General Rosson praises the BIG RED ONE for its "glorious past and a great future of higher attainment."

121 Signal Photo

The 1st Infantry Division's Chief of Staff, Colonel Archie R. Hyle, rings in the 52nd Anniversary of the Big Red One on the ceremonial Montagnard gong, dedicated during the 51st birthday of the 1st Division. The sound of the gong signaled the cutting of the BIG RED ONE birthday cake.

121 Signal Photo

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

General Talbott addresses guests of the BIG RED ONE during anniversary luncheon.

Major General Pham Quoc Thuan, Commanding General of the 5th Infantry Division (ARVN).

General Talbott shakes the hand of Lieutenant General Frank T. Mildren, Deputy Commanding General, USARV, following the anniversary luncheon.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Anniversary guests meet during a luncheon in the Commanding General's villa.

The Government of the Republic of Vietnam bestowed its highest unit citation for valor, the Gallantry Cross with Palm, on the 1st Infantry Division on December 10, 1968.

In March of this year, the Big Red One stopped the 7th NVA Division cold in their planned offensive on Saigon. Lieutenant General Walter T. Kerwin, former II Field Force commander said that . . . "This action of the 1st Division did more to stop the enemy's offensive than that of any other unit."

Last month, elements of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry (Mech.), battled Communist forces for three days as its armored personnel carriers stormed through the forest area near An Loc killing a large number of enemy.

General Talbott remarked that, "there is a certain mystique that draws outstanding professionals into its ranks, many of them again and again, and infuses them with the unalterable convinction that for the 1st Infantry Division, NO MISSION TOO DIFFICULT, NO SACRIFICE TOO GREAT, DUTY FIRST."

121 Signal Photo

Major General Elvy B. Roberts, Commanding General of the 1st Cavalry Division (AIRMOBILE) assembles with luncheon guests prior to departing Lai Khe.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

THE MILLIONTH R&R

Staff Sergeant Lester Hudson, the one-millionth R&R soldier, arrives in Honolulu and into the arms of his wife, Mary, amid press photographers and a colorful Hawaiian welcome.

U.S. Army Photo

Today, Staff Sergeant Lester R. Hudson is back in the jungles of Vietnam directing his men through daily patrols and area reconnaissance. He is a platoon leader assigned to Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry.

In April, the 1st Infantry Division soldier was in Honolulu for nine days, as the one-millionth serviceman to depart Vietnam on rest and recuperation leave since the program started in 1965.

The Gallipolis, Ohio sergeant was flown to Hawaii to rendezvous with his wife, Mary Lee. Coming off a regular Pan American military charter jet filled with other R&R men, the sergeant began to receive special treatment.

The Hudson's were led to the Governor's Lounge, and across a red carpet. On the other side were rows of military and political dignitaries and the press.

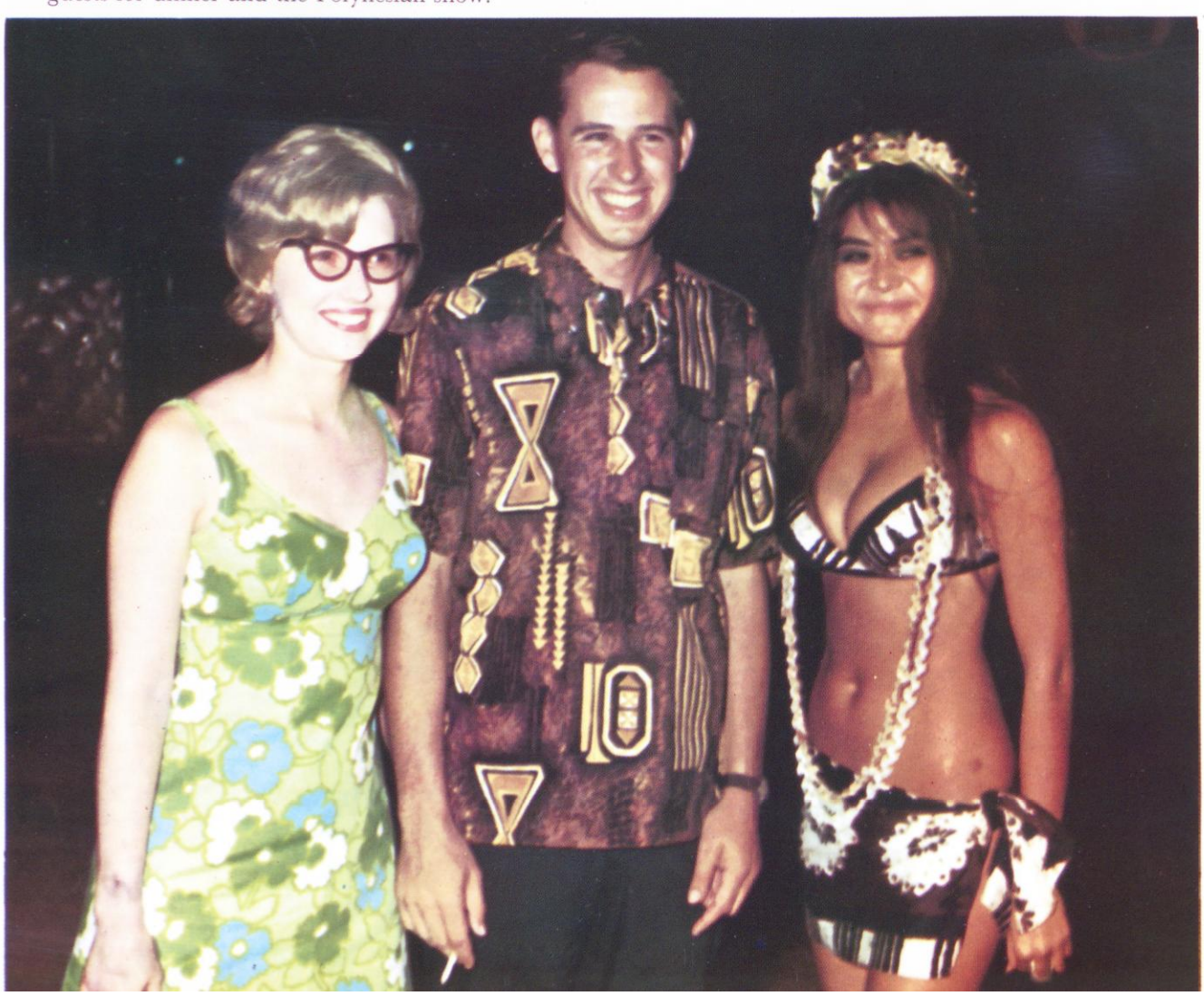
Among the couple's official greeters were Honolulu Mayor Frank F. Fasi, General Ralph E. Haines, commander-in-chief of the U.S. Army, Pacific, and Major General Roy Lassetter Jr., commanding general, U.S. Army, Hawaii.

The 23 year-old sergeant and his wife were provided an ocean-view suite, complete with fruit, flowers and champagne. A stack of invitations to luncheons, dinners and Honolulu entertainment night-spots and Waikiki's poshest restaurants were arranged for their selection. A $40,000 chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce, loaned by a top night club owner, was placed at their disposal.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Sergeant Hudson prepares to learn the hula dance at Honolulu's Queen Surf.

Sergeant and Mrs. Hudson with entertainer Julie Naito at Honolulu's Queen Surf, where the couple were guests for dinner and the Polynesian show.



Sergeant Hudson and wife, Mary, with Hawaii's Governor John A. Burns, who presented the couple with Hawaiian mementos. U.S. Army Photo

The second day in Hawaii was a day alone for them. Hudson said he *shined his brass* while Mrs. Hudson took extra pains with her hair, preparing for the next day when they would be presented with the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps *millionth man* representatives of their services, before a joint session of the Hawaiian state legislature in the new State Capital Building.

They learned later that the legislature sits in joint session only for the President of the United States and when the Governor presents his State of the State message.

During the session, Senate President David C. McClung and House Speaker Tadeo Beppo introduced a resolution, later passed unanimously, to praise the four times decorated Hudson for his service in the Republic of Vietnam. Also included in the day's activities was a visit with Hawaii's Governor John A. Burns, who presented the couple with mememtos from the 50th state.

Hudson has won four medals since being assigned to Vietnam in July 1968, including the Bronze Star for heroism and the Purple Heart.

He is a 1963 graduate of Galia Academy High School and is son of Mr. and Mrs. Chester O. Hudson of Route 2, Gallipolis, Ohio. His wife, Mary, is residing with her parents in Point Pleasant, W.Va., until her husband returns to the United States.

An interesting note of the vacation is no one could find the Hudson's on one day, but they later returned in the evening and drove up to the Aloha Tower and Matson pier in *their* Rolls to board the Lurline. There they found an outside stateroom reserved for them, more champagne and an impromtu bon voyage party before touring the islands. During the cruise, the couple were honor guests of the King and Queen at the Merry Monarch Festival; also visited Volcano National Park on the *Big Island* and later sailed to Maui and more entertainment.

The Hudson's were on their own for the next four days, afterwhich the sergeant kissed his wife goodby and boarded a plane for his return to duty with the Big Red One

By the time the goodbys came for the Hudson's, the two had learned that in Hawaii *Aloha* means *love*.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

ONE 1 LINERS

1 Going on R & R? If it's to Thailand, you are reminded that you need a valid passport and visa when entering or leaving that country by commercial carrier. Failure to have a passport and visa can result in unnecessary inconvenience and expense. In one instance, a soldier had to go all the way to Athens, Greece before he could debark to obtain necessary documentation.

1 The latest Supreme Court ruling says that States may collect sales or use taxes from servicemen even if their permanent home is in another state. Sales and use taxes are now in a different category from personal property and income taxes—a category based on the location of the transaction rather than the residence of the purchaser.

1 Mandatory changeover date for world-wide wear of subdued insignia on field and work uniforms, originally scheduled for 1 July 1969, has been suspended. A new changeover date will be announced by DA as soon as manufacturers provide firm commitment as to when the subdued insignia will be available.

1 There has been some recent news media speculation about the possible authorization of a new beret for Army personnel. In this regard, a proposal that units other than special forces be authorized a beret has been disapproved by DA. Thus, the Green Beret for special forces personnel remains the only one approved for wear within the Army.

1 The Department of Defense has established a special, short-term health insurance program for servicemen being separated from active duty. Effective September 1, the new program will also cover their dependents. Under the new program, servicemen initially will have a choice between two plans, one of which is being offered by Blue Cross-Blue Shield and the other by Mutual of Omaha. The Blue Cross-Blue Shield plan will include maternity benefits. The serviceman will pay the entire cost of whichever plan he chooses.

1 Do you support the Big Red One Scholarship Fund? The Big Red One Association in Vietnam sells many items that could certainly be of great interest to you. The proceeds from the sale of these BRO souveniers go to BROAV and in turn become part of each $1500 scholarship given to the sons of men who died while serving with the First Infantry Division in Vietnam. In view of this purpose, you must agree that it is certainly a worthy cause. Support your Scholarship Fund today.

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives

Honolulu's Leilani Petranek

SP4 Dominic Sondy

BIG RED ONE soldiers carry the colors of the 1st Division during the June 6th, Anniversary observance of D-Day held in Lai Khe.

SP4 John Beard

Danger Forward, Volume 3, Issue 2, Pub. Date June 1, 1969, Collection:1st Infantry Division Publications—Vietnam
RRMRC Digital Archives